Settlement Allows CIA, FBI To Be Sued for Political Spying

CHICAGO, Aug. 14 (UPI)— Community and political groups have the right to sue the CIA and FBI for political spying according to an agreement approved by a federal judge.

Richard Gutman, lawyer for nearly 60 civil rights organizations, political action groups and prominent citizens, said Thursday the settlement allows the FBI to conduct domestic security investigations only when there is evidence of criminal activity.

But such investigations would be limited to "minimal intrusion," the agreement said.

"It is the first enforceable restriction on FBI and CIA spying in history," he said. "This is the first time citizens can sue the FBI or the CIA for political spying."

U.S. District Judge Susan Getzendanner, who signed the agreement Tuesday, said, "The court is aware of no judicial declaration or injunction ever entered against the CIA or FBI domestic intelligence activities, even on behalf of a single litigant, much less in a class action."

Limits on the CIA were not detailed in the agreement, which required the agency to comply with "all applicable laws and regulations."

Agreement between lawyers for the two government agencies and the activist group leaders was reached following a year of negotiations.

The FBI and CIA revised their internal surveillance procedures in 1974 after class-action suits were filed against them by the Alliance to End Repression and the American Civil Liberties Union.